

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-02 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15
DOE-11 SOE-02 NRC-07 ACDA-12 EB-08 OES-07 CEQ-01
/134 W

-----001001 231715Z /43

P R 231609Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3457
SECDEF WASHDC
INFO USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY

UNCLAS LONDON 02999

E. O. NA
TAGS: PARM, UK
SUBJECT: ERW: BRITISH PRESS COMMENT

REF: LONDON 2900

SUMMARY: COMMENTS BY PM CALLAGHAN AND DEFENSE SECRETARY
MULLEY IN COMMONS FEBRUARY 21 (REFTEL) HAVE PRODUCED
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EDITORIAL COMMENTS IN QUALITY LONDON PRESS RANGING FROM
FIRM SUPPORT FOR GOING AHEAD WITH ERW (TIMES) THROUGH
CRITICISM OF SOVIET PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN AND DILATORY
ATTITUDE OF SOME WEST EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS (TELEGRAPH)
TO SKEPTICAL "WAIT AND SEE" ATTITUDE (GUARDIAN). END
SUMMARY.

1. IN MOST DETAILED COMMENT, TIMES ANALYZES PROS AND CONS OF ERW BEFORE CONCLUDING THAT "ARGUMENTS FAVOR GOING AHEAD WITH NEUTRON BOMB" AND THAT WEST SHOULD NOT RENOUNCE ERW EXCEPT AS PART OF AN ARMS CONTROL PACKAGE. IT CHIDES THE SOVIETS FOR RESPONDING INADEQUATELY BOTH TO PRESIDENT CARTER'S OFFER TO DISCUSS REDUCTIONS IN NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND TO WESTERN PROPOSALS IN MBFR.

2. TELEGRAPH SUPPORTS CALLAGHAN IN DENOUNCING SOVIET PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN AGAINST ERW, BUT NOTES LATTER HAS HAD AN EFFECT SINCE SOME EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS ARE HESITATING TO ACCEPT THE NEUTRON BOMB. TELEGRAPH WARNS THAT IF EUROPE'S RESPONSE IS ONE OF DISGUST INSTEAD OF THANKS FOR ERW, IT MAY CREATE DOUBTS IN US THAT EUROPE IS WILLING TO DEFEND ITSELF, AND THIS CAN HARDLY ENCOURAGE THE US TO PRESS SOVIETS ON EUROPEAN DEMANDS FOR CRUISE MISSILES.

3. GUARDIAN CLAIMS CALLAGHAN MISSED THE POINT ABOUT PUBLIC CONCERN OVER THE NEUTRON BOMB: THAT IT WOULD LOWER THE NUCLEAR THRESHOLD, BLUR THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN NUCLEAR AND CONVENTIONAL WAR, AND PERSUADE THE PUBLIC THERE IS SOMETHING "CLEAN" ABOUT THE DEATHS AND LINGERING INJURIES THAT NEUTRON RADIATION WOULD CAUSE. (TIMES, ON OTHER HAND, MAKES CLEAR ITS VIEW THAT PRECISELY SINCE ERW IS MORE LIKELY TO BE USED THAN PRESE UNCLASSIFIED

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TACTICAL NUCLEAR WEAPONS, IT WILL BE A MORE EFFECTIVE DETERRENT.) GUARDIAN CONCLUDES THAT JUDGING WHICH ARGUMENTS CARRY MORE WEIGHT IS DIFFICULT ENOUGH WITHOUT PRIME MINISTER'S "CONFUSING IMPLICATION THAT NEUTRON BOMB IS JUST ANOTHER NUCLEAR WEAPON."

BREWSTER

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Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
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Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
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